



## **HEALTH ADVISORY #45**

### **SPINAL INJECTION PROCEDURES PERFORMED WITHOUT A FACEMASK POSE RISK FOR BACTERIAL MENINGITIS (CDC CLINICAL REMINDER)**

(Ref: [http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/PDF/Clinical\\_Reminder\\_Spinal-Infection\\_Meningitis.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/PDF/Clinical_Reminder_Spinal-Infection_Meningitis.pdf))

**TO:** West Virginia Healthcare Providers

**FROM:** Catherine C. Slemp, MD, MPH, State Health Officer  
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health

**DATE:** April 18, 2011

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO APPLICABLE MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has now investigated multiple outbreaks of bacterial meningitis among patients undergoing spinal injection procedures (e.g., myelogram, spinal or epidural anesthesia, or intrathecal chemotherapy) in acute care hospitals and outpatient facilities. Nearly all spinal injection procedures that resulted in infection were performed by a common healthcare provider who did not wear a facemask. The strain of bacteria isolated from the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) of these patients was identical to the strain recovered from the oral flora of the healthcare provider who performed the spinal injection procedure.

The CDC and West Virginia Bureau for Public Health recommend any healthcare provider performing a spinal injection procedure in any healthcare setting should:

- always wear a facemask when injecting material or inserting a catheter into the epidural or subdural space.
- follow aseptic technique and other safe injection practices for all spinal injection procedures (e.g., use a single-dose vial of medication or contrast solution for only one patient; use only one needle and one syringe only one time for injections).

For information about preventing infections in healthcare settings see: <http://www.cdc.gov/hai/>. For information about injection safety see: <http://www.oneandonlycampaign.com/>. Please contact Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 304-558-5358 for questions.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information to the targeted audiences noted.

**Categories of Health Alert messages:**

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance, warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.